

Dear Representative Willis,

First, let me thank you again for all your efforts on behalf of the CSU System in curtailing the malfeasance and misdirection of funds and power at our central office last year. I was the person whom my representative, Peter Villano, quoted in the New Haven Register, and this along with the actions you directed in helping us keep money and focus on education have renewed my faith in representative democracy. But the mission is, of course, never over.

I have been a professor at Southern for 17 years and am a career teacher who first taught remedial reading, then high school English and math. I understand the importance and missions of all levels of education, and I have the greatest respect for community colleges (at which many of my friends and former students work). However, since I have been at Southern, I have seen it transform into a full-blown university with nationally-known scholars and an increasingly-talented student body. I myself spearheaded the effort to get the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program at Southern, the only full-residence MFA in the state, and a program that is serving many CT residents and attracting out-of-state residents as well. We are a university, and in order to preserve our mission as educators and researchers at a university--an endeavor that goes hand in hand with being best prepared to teach--we need a central office that will act as our advocate in articulating our mission as the institution of higher education which teaches people who remain in Connecticut. Your efforts to reshape that central office are the restart of making it the appropriate sized and focused institution, and I think the next step is to streamline it, while keeping it autonomous and solely focused on how to better CSU's educational and research missions.

I am originally from Louisiana and graduated from LSU and the University of Alabama, but I love Southern and its students more than those alma maters'. I believe we as a faculty have done hard, continuous, caring work to build a wonderful university and I am hopeful you will support us fully in our continuing mission.

Thank you for all you have done and continue to do! See you at the hearing on Thursday.

If possible, I would like this email to be entered as testimony.

Best,  
Tim Parrish